

# Fast Response Time Patterned Vertical Alignment Mode Using Double Step UV Exposure

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We propose an advanced patterned vertical alignment (PVA) mode with a fast response time through double ultraviolet (UV) exposure to UV curable reactive mesogen (RM) mixed in alignment layer. The double step UV exposures using a photomask divide an active pixel region into two regions with a modified pretilt region and a high elastics deformation energy one. As a result, we can achieve not only the fast rising time and but also falling time.

## 1. Introduction

The liquid crystal displays (LCDs) have been developed to achieve the high performances. Especially PVA mode is one of the most adopted liquid crystal (LC) modes because of the strong points such as high contrast ratio at a normal direction and rubbing-free fabrication process [1]. However, PVA mode has slow response time due to the reorientation of the LC molecules. Recently, Lee et al. [2] proposed a surface-controlled PVA (SC-PVA) mode to overcome this problem by generating the pretilt angle using reactive mesogen. The pretilt directions are determined by the direction of the fringe field and fixed by UV exposure in the presence of the applied electric field [3]. However, the falling time was increased because the elastic deformation energy was decreased by the pretilt angles. In this paper, we propose an advanced method to improve response time of the SC-PVA mode by using UV curable reactive mesogen (RM) mixed in alignment layer through double step UV exposure process. During the first UV exposure,

the RM monomers in electrode-overlapping regions are polymerized along the LC directors with pretilt angle using the UV mask under an applied voltage and the RM monomers in electrode-slit regions are polymerized by second UV exposure without voltage and pretilt angle.

## 2. Experiments

Figure 1 shows the fabrication process of proposed SC-PVA mode. To obtain the patterned electrode, indium-tin-oxide (ITO) coated glass was patterned using photo-lithography process. And then, the alignment layer was obtained by the spin coating method using the mixture of vertical alignment material AL60702 (from Japan Synthetic Rubber) and RM 257 (from BASF) with ratio of 2 wt%. The alignment layer was pre-baking at 100 °C for 10 minutes to evaporate the solvent in alignment material and the cured at 180 °C for 1 hour to complete imidization. The cell gap was maintained using glass spacers of 3.3 μm and filled with LC material (MLC-6608,  $\Delta\epsilon = -4.1$  and  $\Delta n = 0.083$ ,



from Merck). At an initial state, the LC molecules were aligned vertically due to the anchoring force of the vertical alignment material and the RM monomers were distributed randomly in the alignment layer as shown in Figure 1(a).

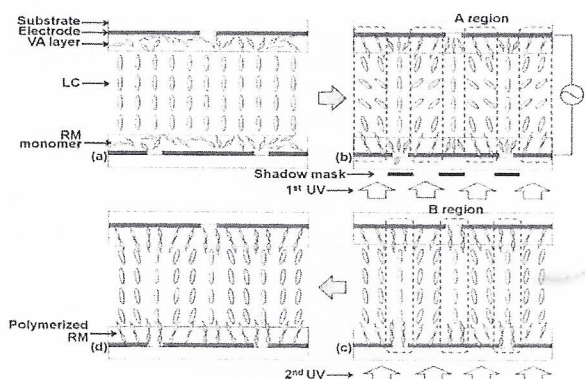


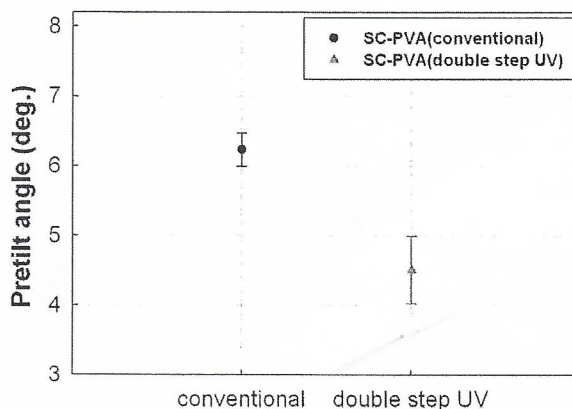
Figure 1. schematic diagrams of proposed double step UV exposure method.

When the voltage larger than a certain threshold voltage ( $V_{th}$ ) was applied to the sample, the LC molecules fell down to the substrate. And the RM monomers near the interface were re-aligned parallel to the LC molecules. The RM monomers are easily dissolved in the LCs and movable due to the liquid crystalline property. To make the different pretilt in one sub-pixel, we used the shadow mask to divide the sub-pixel. In the present of the electric field (4V) larger than threshold voltage, electrode-slit regions (B) were blocked by the shadow mask and the LC cell in electrode-overlapping regions (A) was exposed to the UV light. At this step, the RM monomers in the regions (A) were polymerized in the alignment layer and pretilt angle was generated (Fig. 1(b)). After that, whole panel was exposed to the UV light without shadow mask and electric field. And then the RM monomers in the regions (B) were polymerized in the alignment layer (Fig. 1(c)). By the double-step UV exposure process with

shadow mask, two different pretilt angles can be obtained in one pixel.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The low pretilt angle is important in VA mode to achieve the high transmittance and fast falling time characteristics. Figure 2 shows the measured pretilt angle for normal SC-PVA cell and proposed SC-PVA cell. The pretilt angle was measured polarizer rotation method [9]. By adding the zero pretilt angle regions (B), proposed cell shows the lower pretilt angle than conventional SC-PVA mode about 1.7



Other curing condition in SC-PVA

Figure 2. The measured pretilt angle of conventional SC-PVA cell and the proposed SC-PVA cell with double step UV processes.

Figure 3 shows response time characteristics as a function of applied voltage for normal SC-PVA cell and proposed SC-PVA cell. The rising time was similar to the SC-PVA cell with double step UV exposure at whole grey level as shown in Fig. 2(a) due to the generated pretilt angle by polymerized reactive mesogen. And the falling time was improved about 20% compare to the conventional SC-PVA mode. Because the polymerized RM in the electrode-slit regions maintains the zero pretilt

angle and increases the elastic deformation energy.

As a result, the proposed SC-PVA mode with double step UV exposure of RM polymerization shows the considerable improvement of response time without any increase of falling time than the conventional SC-PVA mode.

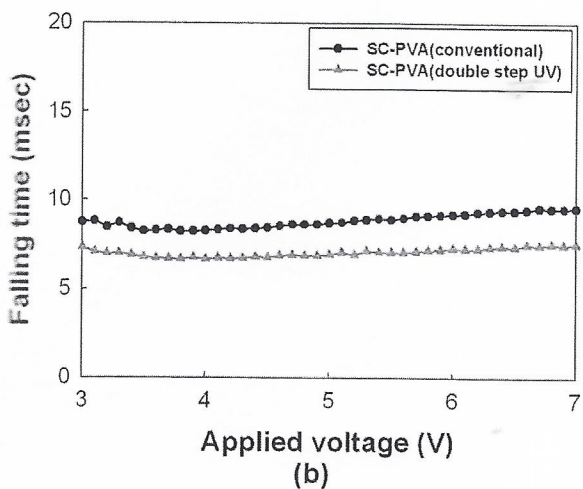
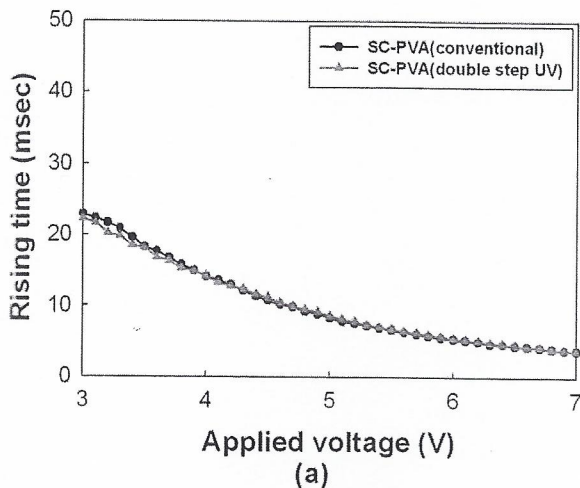


Figure 3. The measured response time of conventional SC-PVA cell and the proposed SC-PVA cell with double step UV processes (a) the rising time, (b) the falling time.

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, we proposed advanced method with double step UV exposure of RM in

SC-PVA mode. The rising time was similar to conventional SC-PVA due to pretilt in the electrode-overlapping regions and the falling time was faster due to increase the elastic deformation energy of the vertical LC orientation in the electrode slit regions.

As a result, the advanced PVA method was realized with double step UV exposure of RMs, which made possible to realize the fast falling time.

#### 5. Acknowledgements

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